

BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE ON THE MERIT SYSTEM  
MEETING

September 7, 2005 – 9:00 A.M.

MINUTES

**Members Present:**

Secretary Erwin Roberts – Chairman	Senator R.J. Palmer, II
Secretary LaJuana Wilcher	Senator Dan Kelly
Representative Michael Cherry	Laura Babbage
Juan G. Rodriguez	Todd Hollenbach, IV
Karen Neeley	Sarah Hall
Vickie Yates Brown	Jack Smith, Jr.
Fontaine Banks, Jr.	Joy Moore
Don Dampier	

**Members Absent:**

Representative Jeff Hoover  
John Y. Brown  
Janey Moores  
Tim Coleman  
William Lear

**Also Present:**

Pat Bryant – Network of Women in State Government  
Marilyn Vance – Network of Women in State Government  
Ronnie O’Nan – Kentucky Transportation Employees’ Association  
Jane Shindlebower-Mers - Kentucky Transportation Employees’ Association  
Mary Rogers – Coalition of State Employee Organizations  
Kelly Divine – Kentucky Association of Right of Way Agents  
Tony Smith – Kentucky Society of Certified Public Managers  
Tony DeName – International Association of Workforce Professionals  
Members of the Media

The fourth meeting of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Merit System was called to order by Chairman Erwin Roberts at 9:17 a.m. on September 7, 2005 in Room 129, Capitol Annex, and Frankfort, Kentucky.

Chairman Roberts introduced newly appointed Task Force member Don Dampier. Mr. Dampier then gave a brief introduction of himself.

Chairman Roberts then asked for the roll call. During Roll Call, the following members were noted as absent: Representative Jeff Hoover, John Y. Brown, Janey Moores, Tim Coleman, William Lear.

Chairman Roberts then thanked all the members for their presence and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 29, 2005 meeting of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Merit System. A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded. All members voted in favor of the motion to approve the minutes of the August 29, 2005 Meeting of the Blue Ribbon Task Force.

Chairman Roberts then thanked all the panel members for agreeing to appear today as representative of the employees of the Commonwealth. Chairman Roberts asked each to give a brief introduction of themselves, which they did. After all introductions had been made, Chairman Roberts then stated that the charge of the task force is to evaluate to see if there is any way in which to improve the merit system to make it better for the employees and the tax payers of the Commonwealth.

Chairman Roberts then opened the floor for questions to the panel members. During the question and answer period the following topics were discussed:

- Responsiveness of Selection Process
- Difficulty in recruiting employees
- Benefits of Internal Mobility
- Technology updates for querying applications
- Method to reward good work
- Pre-selection
- Recruitment of minorities and women
- 18A.140 and Affirmative Action
- Cumbersomeness of hiring process
- Non-merit employees transferring to merit positions right before administration changes
- Need for system for promotions
- Need for two separate registers
- Tests should be reviewed for validity
- 1993 Report
- Political interference on demotions and transfers
- Need for management training for proper completion of employee evaluations
- Ensure a system which will enable the state to hire the most qualified person
- Create a system to promote state government as a career
- Reinstatement of annual increment
- Performance Evaluation System
- Provide more training opportunities
- Uniformity of cabinets and agencies in selection criteria and process
- Personnel Caps

- Inconsistency of interpretation of statutes and regulations

There being no further questions for the panel, Chairman Roberts thanked all the members for their agreeing to be available to share the employees' perspective.

Chairman Roberts called for a five minute break.

Chairman Roberts then called for sub-committee reports.

Senator Palmer indicated that the Classification and Compensation Subcommittee had met on September 6, 2005 and will meet again after the full-task force on September 14, 2005.

Representative Cherry indicated that the Employee Relations Subcommittee discussed the following tentative recommendations:

- Progressive method of disciplinary, grievance and personnel board actions
- Personnel Board to oversee the grievance / mediation program
- Additional funding for the Personnel Board
- Personnel Board subject to the Executive Branch Ethics Code
- Personnel Board to report annual to senate and house committees to report a statistical picture of cases
- Agencies to be able to place employees on paid leave while under investigation
- Performance Evaluation system to have "0" assigned to employees performing at below acceptable levels

Senator Kelly indicated that the Governance Subcommittee had requested information from LRC which would provide an overview of technical problems with 18.A.

Representative Hoover was not in attendance; therefore, the Selection Subcommittee did not have a report.

Chairman Roberts then presented the updated statistical information.

Senator Kelly then stated that the statistical report seems to show that political affiliation was used in hiring practices in previous years. Senator Kelly also stated that former Personnel Cabinet Secretary Carol Palmore had spoken at one of the Governance Subcommittee meetings and had indicated that the issue of hiring pursuant to political affiliation was not investigated during her tenure.

Chairman Roberts then responded to each item of Attorney General Greg Stumbo's resignation as follows:

- Deputy Secretary's Bob Wilson's presentation to the full task force
- Vagueness of merit system law
- Task Force is not looking at wholesale revision of task force
- Representation of members of the merit system on Task Force
- Not attempting to eliminate internal mobility
- Statistical information is only data and is relevant
- Conflicts of Interest

Jack Smith then requested to address the task force to respond to Attorney General Stumbo's remarks concerning Mr. Smith in his resignation from the task force. Mr. Smith then read from a prepared statement.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Roberts moved to adjourned in order to allow each sub-committees to reconvene separately.